

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 2, 2013

Randy Blankenhorn  
Executive Director  
Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning  
233 South Wacker Drive  
Chicago, IL 60606

Dear Randy:

We write in support of the Illiana Expressway project in Will County and Lake County, Ind., and its inclusion in the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) GO TO 2040 Plan. Maintaining a safe and efficient transportation system is critically important for our local, regional, and national economy, and the Illiana Expressway can help Illinois maintain its title as the infrastructure crossroads of the United States.

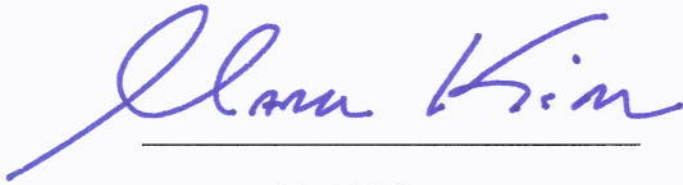
Consistent with the goals of GO TO 2040, the 47-mile Illiana Expressway, will create a critical east-west link between I-55 in Illinois and I-65 in Indiana which will improve regional mobility and enhance the efficient transportation of freight throughout the Midwest. As an alternative route for I-80 traffic, the expressway will reduce congestion and increase freight access to one of the largest intermodal areas in the United States, home to more than 150 distribution facilities in the region. According to the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and CMAP, the Illiana Expressway will carry more freight traffic than any of the major capital project in GO TO 2040.

As freight and manufacturing sectors continue to drive economic activity, it is essential that our transportation system is able to readily support future growth and increased travel demands throughout the region. The construction and development of the Illiana corridor will create thousands of jobs, increase the Gross Regional Product by as much as \$425 million and reduce congestion and the hours of emissions emitted from cars and trucks on congested metropolitan highways. The project will also improve road safety by cutting commuting times, decreasing the number of vehicle miles traveled on arterial roads in the study area by 26 million miles annually. Additionally, according to IDOT the inclusion of the Illiana Expressway in GO TO 2040 will not result in the removal of any current project in the plan. IDOT also estimates that the project will generate sufficient toll revenue to repay the initial cost of the project and provide the necessary operation and maintenance costs.

But perhaps most importantly, the Illiana Expressway project highlights what will undoubtedly be the way forward for new capacity construction projects. Failure to appropriately invest in our infrastructure has created a significant capital backlog, which is compounded by the declining purchasing power of federal and state gas taxes. With no additional revenues expected in the near future, we should look to innovative financing to address a piece of our funding needs. A successful Illiana public-private partnership can help jump start other financially attractive projects, serving as a template for future infrastructure investment in the region.

The Illiana Expressway is a unique transportation investment necessary to keep the regional economy moving. In a time of severe fiscal challenges, innovative financing and public-private partnerships offer new opportunities to modernize our public infrastructure, without new federal borrowing. The Illiana Expressway will further strengthen the regional transportation networks with the global market and ensure that Illinois and Indiana remain central to the transportation and commerce across the United States for many years to come. We appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark Kirk", written over a horizontal line.

Mark Kirk  
U.S. Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dan Coats", written over a horizontal line.

Daniel Coats  
U.S. Senator